you must go home when Italy is so beautiful in the spring."

Luella smiled. "It was Robert Browning who said: 'Oh, to be in England, now that April's there.' " It was the sort of remark she would have made to her father.

Somehow the man beside her, who was obviously over forty, seemed like a fatherly figure. "It is a pity that you cannot see more of Italy," he said reflectively.

As he walked along beside her Luella noticed another small group of young men staring at her, and she could not help feeling glad that she was not alone. "I have already seen quite a lot of your country," she replied. "My parents came often to Rome and his account of this beautiful Cathedral was to complete my father's new book, if he had been able to . . finish it."

"Your father was a writer?" the man beside her asked.

"His name was Richard Hanley," Luella replied. "His book on Greek temples was published in Italy, as well as in other countries."

"Then of course I have heard his name!" the stranger exclaimed. They walked on a little way before he said: "If you are going to the Embassy, Signorina, and I have guessed that you need them to help you to return to England, could you not stay a little longer? I would like to show you the Royal Palace, which is very beautiful."

"That is very kind of you," Luella said, "but I cannot afford to stay here any longer."

The man beside her stopped. "You have no money!" he exclaimed. "Surely that is impossible!"

"I think perhaps there will be some in England," Luella replied, "but my father's funeral took up all we had left in Italy."

The stranger nodded his head. "I can understand that. Funerals are always expensive wherever they take place. But, instead of your leaving so hurriedly, Signorina, I have a suggestion to make."

Because he had stopped and was standing still, Luella felt it would be rude to walk on. She was therefore obliged to stand with him. She looked up at him enquiringly and he said: "I wonder if you would consider a little employment in Milan which would be easy for you to carry out and is very highly paid."

Luella hesitated and he said: "I will not try to persuade you if you are anxious to return immediately to England, but it does seem to me that I could offer you an opportunity for enjoying herself, and also of making a considerable amount of money."

"What would I have to do?" Luella enquired.

As she spoke a carriage went by and the stranger could not answer her until the noise of the wheels and the clatter of the hoofs had faded into the distance. "It is difficult to talk here," he said. "Will you honour me by coming to my office which is not far away? Then I can explain to you very simply what would be required."

Luella started to say, "I think I had best go to the British Embassy," when another carriage passed. Behind it came a carriage that was for hire. The man beside her raised his hand and the coachman reined in